



## Staying Safe in Cold Weather



Exposure to cold can cause injury or serious illness such as frostbite or hypothermia. The likelihood of injury or illness depends on factors such as physical activity, clothing, wind, humidity, working and living conditions, and a person's age and state of health. Follow these tips to stay safe in cold weather:

- Dress appropriately before going outdoors. The air temperature does not have to be below freezing for someone to experience cold emergencies such as hypothermia and frostbite. Wind speed can create dangerously cold conditions even when the temperature is not that low.
  - If possible, avoid being outside in the coldest part of the day, or for extended periods of time in extreme cold weather.
  - Dress in layers so you can adjust to changing conditions. Avoid overdressing or overexertion that can lead to heat illness.
  - Most of your body heat is lost through your head so wear a hat, preferably one that covers your ears.
  - Mittens provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.
  - Wear waterproof, insulated boots to help avoid hypothermia or frostbite by keeping your feet warm and dry and to maintain your footing in ice and snow.
  - Take frequent breaks and stay hydrated.
  - Get out of wet clothes immediately and warm the core body temperature with a blanket or warm fluids like hot cider or soup. Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol if you think you are experiencing hypothermia or frostbite.
- Hypothermia can be a serious medical condition. Recognize the symptoms: confusion, dizziness, exhaustion and severe shivering. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms during cold weather.
- Recognize frostbite warning signs: gray, white or yellow skin discoloration, numbness, waxy feeling skin. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms.

To learn more about signals of and how to care for cold- or heat-related problems, take a Community First Aid and Safety course from your [local Red Cross chapter](#).

- Holiday traveling and winter can be a dangerous combination. Allow extra time when traveling. Monitor weather conditions carefully and adhere to travel advisories.
- Keep a winter storm survival kit in your car. This should include blankets, food, flares, chains, gloves and first aid supplies. Visit the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Web site](#) for a more extensive list.

### [NOAA's Winter Weather Awareness](#)

Learn more about how to prepare for winter weather! Read [Winter Storms: The Deceptive Killers. Are You Ready for a Winter Storm?](#)

### [NOAA's Interactive Weather Site](#)

[National Warnings Area](#)